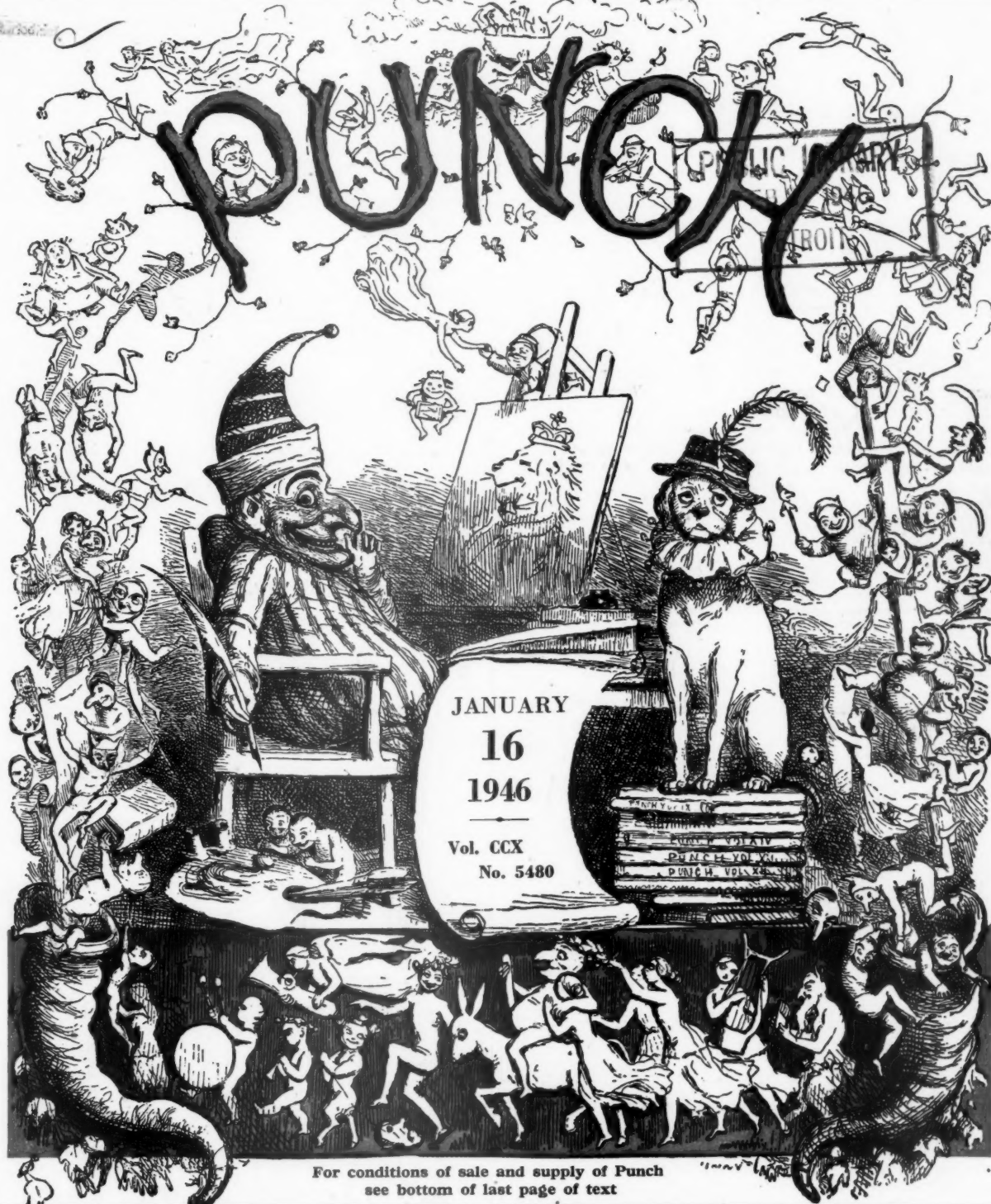


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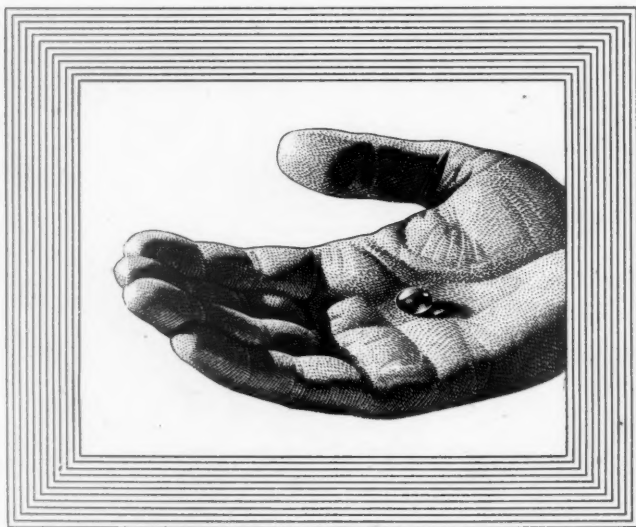
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to the grape
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Lemco

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Chosen for Dependability
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BEFORE THE WAR



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Champion Plugs were chosen after selective tests by engineers of the Nuffield Organisation. Champion dependability has long since proved this wisdom. Follow Morris example—always use Champion, the choice of the British Motor Industry.

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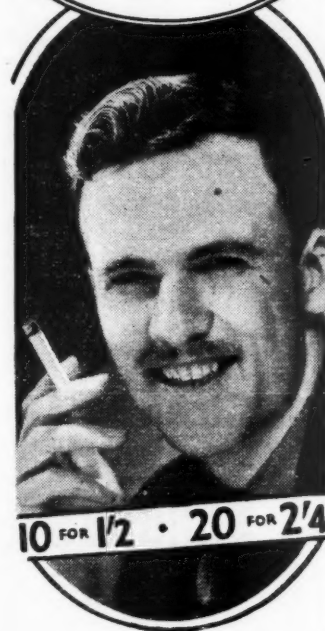
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ah! oh!
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SOLO MEANS REAL ORANGE JUICE

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Now that we have changed over to peace-time production Pedigree Pets and Dolls are reaching the shops in steadily increasing numbers. Try your toy shop now. You may be lucky. If not, remember Pedigree goods are well worth waiting for.

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Keep her well in **WOOL** underwear

Issued by the International Wool Secretariat

*... to pass freely without
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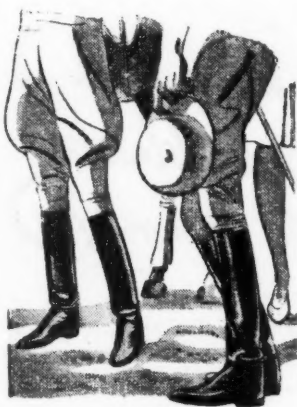
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*The World's Best
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 Until then the
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PVI



14/9/41.

This pair of Lotus Veldtschoen were bought exactly 20 years ago this month. They have been worn regularly throughout every winter and have withstood all weathers without the slightest indication of letting in water. The uppers are still in excellent condition.

LOTUS
Veldtschoen
GUARANTEED WATERPROOF



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It can also be pleasant! With blankets it's the turning down of the cut edges with a decorative stitch—known as "blanket-stitch." The finest blankets are bound with satin and petersham.

"MODERNA" Blankets will be guaranteed 5 Ways, 5 years. Fadeless, Odourless, Mothproof, Unshrinkable, and all Pure Lamb's Wool. In the newest of pastel shades.

As soon as new conditions permit, they will be obtainable in all the best stores.

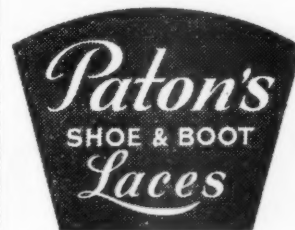
MODERNA

Blankets for Post-War Homes

Thomas Ratcliffe and Co., Ltd.
 MYTHOLMROYD, YORKS.




*Wise in judging
 Many cases
 Verdict goes to
 Paton's Laces.*



From your retailer

P.3

WM. PATON LTD. • JOHNSTONE • SCOTLAND



When Henry Irving trod the boards of the Lyceum theatre as "Mathias" in "The Bells" how the audience cheered their favourite tragedian at his every curtain! Those too were the days of the frequent appearances of those other favourites, Romary Biscuits. To-day we hope it will be but a short interval before the curtain goes up again on more abundant supplies of *Romary's Tunbridge Wells Water Biscuits — Wheaten Biscuits — Cocktail Biscuits — Ginger Nuts — and Honey Bake.*

ROMARY
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GEOORGIAN Interior with Mahogany furniture in the manner of Chippendale and Hepplewhite. Sketched in Harrods famous Furnishing Galleries by Hanslip Fletcher.

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TABLE WATERS THROUGH FIVE SUCCESSIVE REIGNS



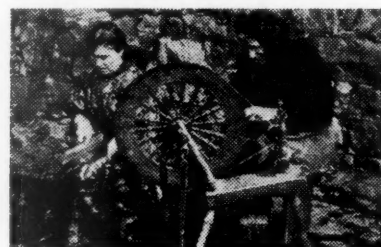

*Why are
these Islands
so famous?*

**They are the home of
HANDSPUN HARRIS TWEED**

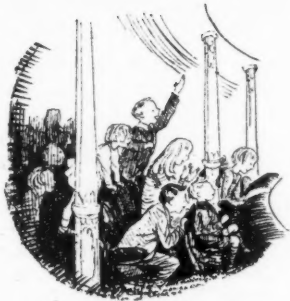
The distinctive appearance, matchless texture and variety of design and colour of Harris Tweed continues to find favour with all who appreciate "character" in clothes, and the word HANDSPUN stamped above the trade mark on the cloth is an assurance that it is indeed Harris Tweed hand spun and hand woven at the homes of the Islanders of the Outer Hebrides.



See the trade mark on the cloth. See the label on the garment.



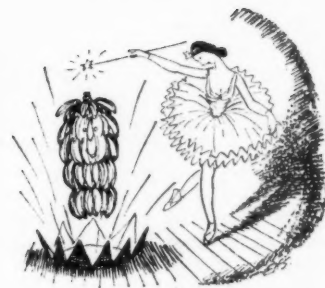
Issued by
The HARRIS TWEED Assoc. Ltd., Salisbury House, London Wall, E.C.2.



PUNCH

Or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCX No. 5480

January 16 1946

Charivaria

MAGNA Carta, which has been in America since 1939, is being returned to this country. There is no intention, of course, of putting it into effect.

That Frenchman who says he doesn't like the colour of our five-pound notes has prompted inquiries from many quarters as to what colour they are making them nowadays.

A little boy on seeing his first banana thought it was a sausage. The great difference of course is that the banana is one hundred per cent. of what it was before the war.

It is rumoured that the Civil Service, stung by a press campaign, is to investigate how many buildings in and around Fleet Street are occupied by the staffs of newspapers.



Firewood is now so scarce in some areas that even the toy-shops have only a few pieces left.

"FURNISHED BUNGALOW in country . . . about one acre of woodland; 10 minutes from bus; easily run."

Advt. in "Farnham Herald."

Downhill, eh?

An American soldier in London complains that he was sold a postage stamp that would not stick to the envelope. He startled the girl behind the grille by asking if she had any gum, chum.

A dock hand who stole sixty-two tins of sardines was said to look bulky when caught. He asked for the sixty-two cases to be taken into consideration.



"In Yorkshire this month a 200-acre farm at Green Hammerton made £110,000."—*"Daily Mail."*

Perhaps the cook had agreed to stay on.

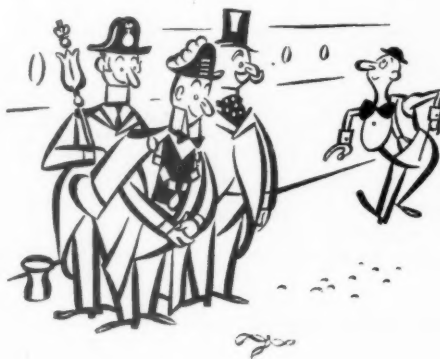
There are stated to be thousands of unlicensed wireless sets in use in this country. Will listeners please tune in to the still small voice of conscience?

A writer wonders whether those taking part in crime to-day can really be cured. Police incline to the theory that they can, given time.

The nervous tension of the last six years is said to have altered our looks. A correspondent got a shock recently when he noticed that he bore a distinct resemblance to his pre-war passport photograph.

The Board of Trade is reluctant to increase the length of men's socks until sufficient elastic is available to make new suspenders to replace those that have been over-stretched holding up utility socks.

One of the most fancied candidates for the Grand National is said to be suffering from nerves. It is, however, expected to get over the jumps in time.



"MORE GIN AND BLANKETS
—BUT FOR EXPORT ONLY."

"Evening Standard."

No vermouth, no tonic water, no lime.

Music-hall comedians wish to express their regret that owing to pressure of pantomime engagements they were unable officially to welcome the first banana off the ship when it recently arrived in this country.

Out of Africa

MAN PURSUED BY POLICEMAN TURNED HIMSELF INTO SNAKE TO AVOID ARREST.

IN these simple words the *Daily Comet* of Lagos announces the latest development of the Crime Wave in British West Africa, and perhaps we may turn a moment from our troubles here in London to consider the difficult position of the Scotland Yard of Ashanti.

There was nothing unusual in the affair which led up to this incident. A "gang of malcontents," it would seem, had insulted Mr. Nana Kwasi Buagye. We are not told what Mr. Buagye had done to annoy them, nor at what remarks he took umbrage. From all that I remember of the books I have read about Ashanti they may have merely mentioned that his maternal uncle had been rude to a tree. But, in any case, there was rioting: serious rioting, for a special police squad was hastily summoned from Bikwai to deal with the situation.

One of the ringleaders, Kobina Wuo, fled.

"Escort Yaya was on the heels of Kobina Wuo, who took to a nearby bush. Wuo was still being pursued by Yaya, who, to his astonishment, found a huge snake, an adder, across his way. Kobina had disappeared. Constable Yaya used his cudgel on the snake. At the third hit, the snake changed into a human being in the person of Kobina Wuo. The wholesale arrest," concludes the reporter, "was over-shadowed by this supernatural deed of Kobina Wuo."

I think that would have been so even in London.

"Did you actually see accused becoming an adder?"

"No, I simply saw an adder."

"Why did you strike the adder?"

"I considered it a menace to the public safety."

"You were not aware of its identity with accused?"

"Not until the third hit."

"If it had not become accused at this point, it might have avoided capture altogether?"

"Presumably."

"Did it make any statement?"

"Only after ceasing to be an adder and becoming accused."

"What did it say then?"

"It said 'Ow,' or words to that effect."

The unbiased mind of a magistrate would be compelled to take these points into consideration. The defence might urge that violence had been employed in securing the arrest of Mr. Wuo while he was an adder; the prosecution could argue that while he was an adder Mr. Wuo was a public nuisance and not under due control; and much would depend on the precise attitude adopted towards Constable Yaya by Mr. Wuo at the moment when he relinquished his alibi and became Mr. Wuo again.

In fine, though the whole conduct of the case is a testimony to the skill and patience of the Ashanti police force, in unravelling the tangled skein of criminal intrigue, and shows how one false step by an evil-doer, one careless move at a critical juncture, almost inevitably leads to capture and imprisonment, it seems not unlikely that, if this was a first offence, Mr. Wuo was let off with a small fine or a suitable reprimand.

"May this be a lesson to you not to insult a fellow-citizen without cause," said the kind-hearted magistrate (or so I fancied), looking over his horn-rimmed spectacles and smiling benignantly.

"Thank you, your honour."

Quietly becoming an adder again, the accused left the dock, and glided into a nearby bush.

This, however, is all the merest surmise. For Lagos is not London, although it has many of London's troubles to fight and overcome.

"Let the Nigerian Government stop all this neolithic nonsense about inflammation," I read in another issue. And in yet another, under the heading "THE JUNE UNAUTHORIZED STRIKE," the Special Correspondent of the *Daily Comet* rather acidly observes, "Mr. Imondu, whom I met standing on a table dressed in a curious 'juju' dress and holding a magic horse-tail, was there haranguing a great mass of his union members in a language which, in my opinion, completely baffled both his expert interpreter and his simple gullible audience."

This happened at the general meeting of the Railway Workers' Union, and caused the reporter, on reaching home, to "repair into a chair in the corner of my parlour, seriously thinking of the inevitable repercussions of the impending catastrophe."

They were not long delayed. He went to another meeting, addressed by the same speaker.

"After re-echoing the best sentences of Mr. Imondu's declamation, the men sprang frantically up on their feet and staring at me stated, 'Thief! Thief! You have been bribed; the Government has bribed you.' I quickly tumbled off the table for fear I might be tumbled over, should Mr. Imondu descend before I did. Then followed the showering on me of an appreciable quantity of 'gari'—"gari" being the local type of rationed flour for which the housewives of Lagos have to form queues.

But if reporters and special correspondents of the *Daily Comet* have an exciting life, things are easier on the commercial side, if one may judge from the following paragraph:

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS

ALL ADVERTISEMENTS INTENDED FOR PUBLICATION IN THE DAILY COMET MUST BE HANDED IN NOT LATER THAN 12.30 P.M. ON THE DAY FOLLOWING THE DAY OF PUBLICATION.

* * * * *

Let us leave Lagos with a reluctant farewell. Looking forward into the future one sees the time when British West Africa is a self-governing Dominion and sends her delegates to the Assembly of the United Nations of the World. But that will not be just yet. One cannot have people turning into snakes or jumping on to tables in juju attire during a serious debate on the frontiers of Persia or the use of the atom bomb.

EVOE.

Japanese Family Life

"The Japanese forces in the Andamans are being worked hard. With their relations in a little wicker basket slung on their belts, they run from the jetties to the waiting lorries carrying sacks of supplies."—*Indian paper*.

o o

There was an old colonel from Kenya
Who knew that he had schizophrenia.

It wasn't the word

That fogged the old bird,

But which of his "egos" was senior.



THE COUNTER-ATTITUDINARIAN

"I don't see what they complain about."



"With all this traffic, why don't they make the reds shorter?"

For Men in Aprons

I HAVE learned three useful things this week and now hasten to pass them on to my fellow-men wherever they may be. After all, we are all fighting the same daily battle against discouragement and debt and choked stove-pipes, and if we do not march forward hand-in-hand like brothers, sharing our slender resources of knowledge and experience in a true spirit of comradeship, how are we to get through the wash-up (I am speaking metaphorically now) before bed-time?

The answer to this question is that it cannot be done.

My first point then relates to the sharpening of knives. Many of us are too prone not to sharpen our knives at all; or, if we do sharpen them, to sharpen them in such a way that they are blunter when we have finished than they were at the beginning. When this happens you may be sure you are not sharpening them the right way. May I strike a personal note for one moment, to illustrate my meaning? When sharpening a scythe the stone is passed along the surface of the blade (which is held stationary), preferably with a rotatory motion in front and more of a swish at the back. This is the correct method and I am not prepared to enter into any discussion or argument about it. Where I have been at fault is in supposing for

years that the same procedure holds good, *mutatis mutandis*, for carving knives. It does not. In this case it is the steel that remains stationary, while the knife flashes this way and that across it. I take this information thankfully, and hoping no question of payment arises, from an article by Mr. Bruce Blunt in the *Daily Express*. "Take a firm grip of the steel with the left hand," says Mr. Blunt, "and hold it at elbow-level, inclined towards the right. The knife, held in the right hand, should start its journey with the base of the blade at the point of the steel and travel smartly the whole way down on each side of the steel alternately."

There is no doubt that this is the right method. I have tried it out in the privacy of my own dining-room and it works. More than that, it throws one automatically into the stance that one has seen and envied a hundred times in butcher's shop and grill room but has never been able to emulate. Best of all, drudgery is abolished and carving becomes a pleasant exercise for old and young alike.

On one point I am not quite clear. The steel, Mr. Blunt says, is held at elbow-level. But at what level is the elbow held? He doesn't say, and perhaps it doesn't matter. Just take up a comfortable position and get to work.

"As it is useless to sharpen the back of the knife," Mr. Blunt sensibly adds, "this should be raised slightly from the steel and always turned towards the left, otherwise the left hand might be accidentally severed at the wrist."

I cannot think of any more conclusive proof of the superiority of Mr. Blunt's method than this last remark of his. With the old wrong system of sharpening I find it impossible to sever the wrist even on purpose.

The second splendid thing I have learned is that when a stove won't go it is not *necessarily* the fault of the coke or anthracite. About two thirds of the way up the pipe or chimney which runs up from the top of the stove and disappears in a quaint way into the wall there is, if you have a stove like mine, a bend, and at this bend is a trap-door in the form of a plate which when loosened at the top swings easily about its lower retaining pin. My advice to you is to open this door and drive the handle of a broom as far as it will go into the aperture. Of course a proper brush is better, but one has not always got just what one would like in this world. To get the broom-handle out, pretend it has stuck and ask somebody else whether he has strong enough wrists to free it, adding, if you wish, that you have just severed your own through failing to turn the back of the knife towards the left. Few men can resist an invitation like this, for a belief in the strength of his own wrists is one of man's most universal delusions.

This is not the place to describe what comes down when the broom-handle is pulled out. That can be discovered by the method of inspection. What matters is that the stove goes like the wind for the next forty-eight hours, consuming fuel at such a speed that it is a positive relief to see it go out in the normal way on the morning of the third day.

Readers may like to know how the above useful tip came my way. It was luck mostly. The fact is that the trap-door or plate I have spoken of fell open of its own accord at a time when I happened to have lost my temper with the stove and was beating it pretty freely about the back and sides with a poker. Seeing the opening I naturally probed it with the broom-handle, and the rest followed automatically.

The third piece of information I have for you is that if you have been left alone in the house with some soup in a saucepan and a little cold meat and pickles, the temptation to try to turn the soup into a stew by putting pieces of the meat into it and boiling the whole lot up together is irresistible. But it won't do. I don't say that if you minced the meat up first it might not be all right; I haven't tried it. The point is that there is practically no temptation to mince the meat up first, the urge being simply to cut slices off (with the knife held in the right hand) and drop them in the saucepan. I cannot explain why, but being boiled up with soup toughens meat right up. You can't eat it. The most you can do, to save waste, is to let it cool off and then hammer it back on to the joint again. "This" (and I am putting the words in inverted commas because I believe the phrase or something very like it is to be found in *Mrs. Beeton*) "spoils the appearance of the joint."

So there are my three little lessons for you. I hope I am not preaching to the converted. I hope I am not wrong in my conjecture that to thousands of other men, as to me, these discoveries will bring new hope, new courage and a fresh outlook on life as it is lived in our kitchens and bed-sitting rooms to-day. If so, I shall have had my reward.

If there is anything else you don't know, why not write to me, marking your envelope in some suitable way?

H. F. E.

The Letter

YOU cannot conceive, wrote the countess, what conditions are like over here. Everything, wrote the countess, is utterly depressing,

the future is unutterably drear.

We've none of us any clothes you know; I wear the same old dresses I wore two years ago, and though I dare say they are adequate they are such a *blistering* bore.

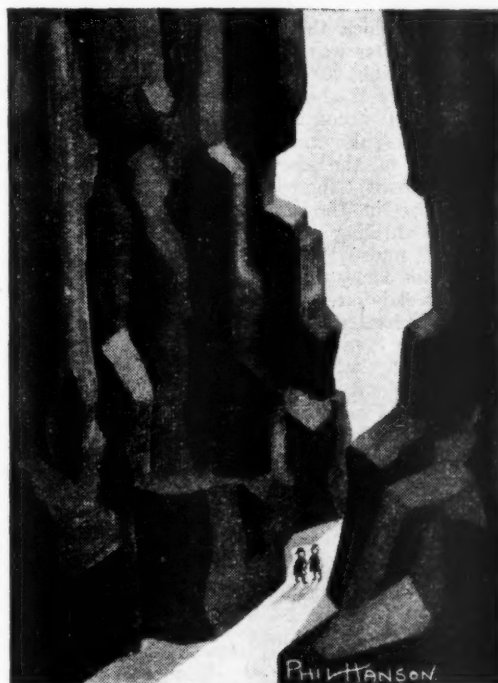
We are caving in with the cold, wrote the countess, and though all the fires are alight George and I have to go without baths, if you please, nearly every Saturday night, and the central heating is very feeble and the gas heaters give out next to no heat, and I simply won't break your heart, wrote the countess, by telling you what we eat!

I know you cannot imagine, wrote the countess, being so far away, what terrible hardships we endured during the war years and are *still* enduring to-day.

Where are the fruits of victory, I ask myself? Have we won, my friend, only to lose? Where is the nail varnish and the extra petrol coupons? Where are the bananas and the shoes?

Oh, I do wish I were dead, wrote the countess, as dead as a slice of Spam!

I am thinking of you, answered Miss van der Byl, writing from Rotterdam. V. G.



"Well, well, well—it is a small world!"

At the Pictures

THE AMERICAN F.B.I.

THERE is an ominous march tune accompanying the credit titles of *The House on 92nd Street* (Director: HENRY HATHAWAY), which suggests that we are going to get one of those pictures in which the members of some organization stride along bellowing a song about what fine fellows they are. However, although Hollywood might easily allow this in a film about the noble young men of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, for once they have thought better of it.

I don't see how this can justifiably be called "the best spy film ever made," as it has been; the suspense is not concentrated enough, it is constantly being dissipated by the details of scientific detection—which are absorbingly interesting, admitted, but do not powerfully move and excite. The picture is in fact a semi-documentary, or rather—this, I think, gives the impression almost exactly—a feature-length "Crime Does Not Pay," about the Nazi spy system in the United States and how the F.B.I. defeated a particular part of it. If it makes it more interesting for you to believe that the "Process 97" which the spies in this film were after was the secret of the atomic bomb, very well; but I don't see why it should. The story's essential strength lies in the good old devices, the ones that never fail: disguise in the enemy camp, suspense, pursuit, the last-minute rescue, gunfire in the dark. That is the thrilling part of it; the film's unusual interest apart from this comes from the details of the elaborate modern apparatus of investigation (particularly the transparent mirror, through which the suave enemy agent is filmed by the F.B.I. as he discusses his plans). Naturally the lighter moments are not many; but I remember with affection the theatrical agent who, told that a man's feat of playing fourteen chess games at once was wonderful, replies sadly "Sure, but it ain't box-office." There is also the occasion when two tough F.B.I. men lope like panthers dramatically up to a front door . . . and pretend to have come delivering pamphlets about A.R.P.

There are always two ways to take the dialogue of such pictures as *Kitty* (Director: MITCHELL LEISEN): one can assume that the film-makers did their best to get it correctly "in period," in which event one laughs

"the unmitigated gall" to do something or other; or one can allow (this is probably right, because it requires less learning and less trouble) that they used modern idioms as a sort of translation or equivalent of those of the eighteenth century. As it happens, the "atmosphere" of this piece comes over unusually well; that is, one gets an impression of a credible collective life, in which the "period" details, inaccurate though some of them may be, are reasonably convincing and do not insult the intelligence by their absurdity, or bore because of their irrelevance.

As a story, *Kitty* is in the *Forever Amber* and *Gone With the Wind* tradition, and it also presents reminiscences of *Frenchman's Creek*; but the film is certainly one of Hollywood's most successful attempts at a "period" picture of England. It is a sort of *Pygmalion* of the seventeen-eighties, with rather more crude psychology and an eighteenth-century cad in place of Professor Higgins—as well, of course, as an eighteenth-century wanton in place of the respectable *Eliza*. It seems that *Kitty* (a thieving slut) was painted by Gainsborough in the clothes of a fine lady, after which the dashing but dissolute *Sir Hugh Marcy* and his hard-drinking aunt *Lady Susan* proceeded to turn her into one—with staggering speed, according to the dates we are given. All a lot of nonsense, to be sure; yet there is that hint of genuine "period," and the playing is good. PAULETTE GODDARD makes a creditable shot at a Cockney accent; and CONSTANCE COLLIER's performance as *Lady Susan* amounts, I think, to stealing the picture.

Those Endearing Young Charms (Director: LEWIS ALLEN) is an example of very considerable acting skill and even subtlety used in the service of a trivial and almost cynically contrived "hokum" story. It deals with a lady-killer (ROBERT YOUNG), disgustingly described by his rival as "smooth—like a silkworm," a calculating operator who "doesn't even say Hullo unless he's got an angle," who suddenly becomes—for the sake of ending the story happily—a good, sound, honest, sterling fellow such as a nice girl (LAIRDAINE DAY) will wait for. Love will do anything; Hollywood has told us before. R. M.



J.H.D.

(The House on 92nd Street)

BACK-ROOM BOY (ENEMY AGENT)

Col. Hammersohn LEO G. CARROLL

contemptuously to hear (for instance) a young blood of 1783 declaring with emphasis that something is "definitely off" and referring to someone's having



J.H.D.W.D.

(Kitty)

FRONT-ROOM GIRL (MARRIAGE SCHEMER)

Kitty PAULETTE GODDARD
Jonathan Selby DENNIS HOEY

Hearts are Trompeurs.

I HAVE been reading a good many French comedies lately, and I have come to the conclusion that in order to write these works the playwright must have not only some idea of plot and knowledge of the stage, but a firm grip on the verb *tromper* and an enormous collection of adjectives describing horror, stupefaction, astonishment, and so on. Everyone in a French play is always beside himself, beyond himself, out of himself, above himself, below himself, and suffering from shock.

To give you an idea of the sort of thing demanded of the author, I quote a short scene from *Les Deux Fripons* (a play which I have just made up myself but which is none the less typical for that. On the contrary). Madame Vigny, her husband, and a man called Bolduc are rushing excitedly about the stage:

Mme. Vigny (*ahurie*). Tu me trompes!

Bolduc (*stupéfait*). Moi? Tu me trompes.

Vigny (*abasourdi*). Quoi? Qui? Elle vous trompe? Elle me trompe.

Mme. Vigny (*frappée*). (*à Vigny*) Ah, ça! Et tu, tu me trompes, gredin!

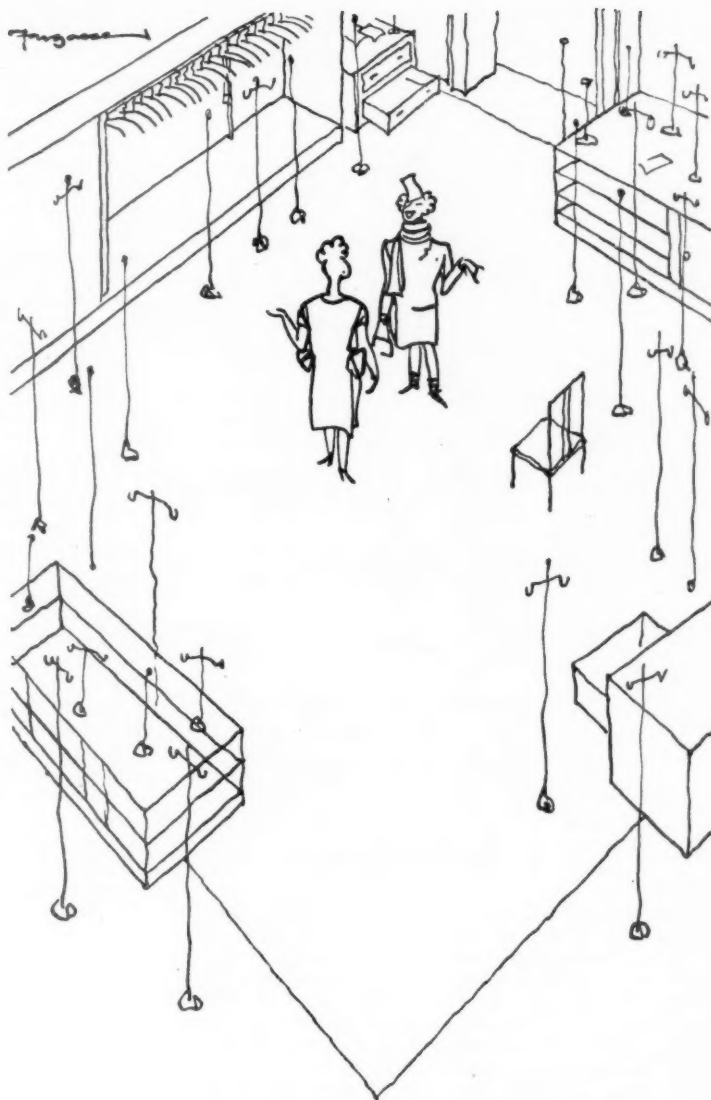
Bolduc (*hors lui*). Ah!

Vigny (*bondissant*). Bon! Parfait! Alors, je te trompe!

Mme. Vigny (*ébahie*). Tu l'admets? Oh!

Vigny (*fort ému*). Non. (*à part*). Qu'est-ce qu'elle a?

And this scene has only three characters. When you get eight or ten people on the stage at once, all of them *trompés* and all *ahuris*, bounding, stupefied, stunned, furious, bouleversés, upset, knocked backwards, blowing up, falling down, dismayed, terrified, appalled, shocked, aghast, and agog, you really have stirring times and plenty of action. Which never fails to grip an audience. An Englishman may object that the same thing is always happening, and may prefer the English drama in which nothing happens. But it never *seems* the same to a French audience, if the playwright is on the job. Besides the endless possibilities of tromping among eight or ten characters, one never knows which of them is going to be *épouvanté* and which is going to be *affolé*. That keeps the audience guessing and happy. Indeed, an ingenious dramatist can freshen things up by making the characters not only staggered and concussed but actually minced, dislocated, amputated, disintegrated, and so on.



"No, nothing special, thanks—just browsing."

You will notice that the aside is still used in French drama, though Ibsen is supposed to have made the aside unnecessary . . . he was a great authority on what was unnecessary, and spared neither himself nor others. But the French aside is not used so extensively as in the old days, when an actor would be left alone on the stage for ten or fifteen minutes while he addressed the audience, asking them "What would you do in my place?" or telling them what had happened during the last *entr'acte*. The modern aside keeps the illusion better. Another

character always notices that the soliloquist has been muttering to himself and quickly asks "Quoi?" to which the soliloquist always replies "Rien," which satisfies both the other chap and the audience.

You will also notice that *ému* does not mean the old crossword bird, although many a *mari trompé* has his head in the sand. That is, if emus *do* put their heads in the sand. In the antipodes, I suppose, they put their feet in it instead. Well, well, so do husbands. Hence the drama.



"I wonder what turn the larceny wave took last night."

H. J.'s Belles-Lettres

THIS Belle-Lettre deals with reference-books, and the chief use of such is not for looking up things after your ignorance has been exposed, but for acquiring information to which the conversation may be led round, cricketers, for example, reading several pages of Wisden at a gulp and then rushing out to unload before evaporation. For this purpose encyclopædias beat dictionaries, though the New English one, a sort of by-product of Oxford like the Boat-Race, is a great source of erudition as it is full of quotations from good, obscure sources such as the *Mechanics' Journal* for 1834, which might be missed by those whose reading is confined to "Everymans." The disadvantage of encyclopædias is that they are either the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, where the articles are so long you might as well read a book on the subject and have done with it, or they are not the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and their users are filled with a sneaking fear that at any moment they be out-trumped. Half-way between dictionaries and encyclopædias is a French writer called Larousse, who begins rather monotonously with words in alphabetical order but wanders off into the kind of thing you would find if you strung a large number of cigarette cards together.

A very nutritious and versatile work of reference is *Whitaker's Almanack*, which not only wins conversations for you but provides inspiration by showing how many cosy jobs there are about the world. If you follow it carefully from year to year you can watch people progress up a Government Department, or sometimes hop sideways

into another; you can even form a Whitaker Club and gamble on promotions. Tide-tables have their devotees, but as all tides do is roll in and out they cannot compare in interest with trains, which come apart, miss connections and burrow underground, reappearing dozens of pages later. Tides are to trains as beggar-my-neighbour to roulette.

Some reference-books suffer from having snobbish sneers cast at them, especially rhyming dictionaries, which are held by many soulful poets to be fleshly and low, but I can never see that they are any worse than a pencil-sharpener or other mechanical device which the well-equipped author will find in his snugery or gazebo. It is true that when all this assonance came in it became less necessary to buy one, and hence verse is cheaper to compose than it used to be; but the humble and laborious compilers of these works still usefully bring together ideas that no one has thought of connecting before and do a good deal of the poet's work for him. My rhyming dictionary puts augur and sulphur, perdu and Urdu together, for example, and thus starts trains of fancy like billyho.

Many obvious reference-books do not exist at all. For example, when you pass a man in the street and feel vaguely you ought to know who he is, what you need is a handbook of celebrities on the lines of those bird-books for the pocket; again, while there are many collections of funny stories, there are few of sad ones, yet these have the great advantage that they cannot fall so obviously flat. Scholars, who are more interested in the trimmings than in the text of books, would welcome an Annual Guide to the best footnotes, bibliographies and errata. Lastly, since most cookery books suffer from beginning each recipe with the name of the dish, which is not much help to the cook who is an inexperienced diner, publishers should produce a manual describing the appearance and taste, and showing how it can be arrived at, e.g., To produce a thick, yellow, spongy thing, rather like an edible shammy leather tobacco-pouch, you want eggs and a frying-pan, etc.

My favourite reference-book is a volume called *What You Ought to be Ashamed of Not Knowing*, compiled and sold at doors by a hawker named Fireman "Mary Ann Evans," the part in quotes being a pseudonym. It is a useful work, as the dust-cover, unlike most I have tried, really can be used for dusting. The contents are divided into four parts: (1) Hand-list of Felonies and Misdemeanours with Defences; (2) a Rubber Relief Map of Southern England: you blow it up and the knobs come in the right place; (3) the Streets of London in Order of Length; (4) *Mélange Biographique*, from which I give extracts:

BURY-THE-HATCHET TOMLINSON. Iconoclastic biographer of George Washington. Advocated the use of vampires in phlebotomy.

ESTEROLLA SIEGO, MARQUIS OF. Intending to build the highest tower in the vicinity he collected a large number of bricks for the purpose, but on being warned by a warlock that any tower he did build would fall down and hit somebody, he built wells instead.

FALSEFORTH. A character in an old play, mainly at the beginning and end.

OLD FATHER HAGG. Noted figure in the folk-lore of Rutland. Had a tame solan goose which bid for him at auctions.

PALLY DU POUDES. Bon viveur who popularized the use of bismuth in Paris.

SULTAN SOULMEIN. He was given three wishes by a Djinn, but being a contented kind of man he never used them, which wasted the Djinn's time.

TI LI TANG. Sage who, on being offered the choice by

the Emperor Pu of a thousand gold pieces or a potter's wheel, chose the gold, saying, "I leave the wheel for my betters."

You may wonder why, as a scientist, I have not mentioned scientific reference-books, which surely, you will say, must be in constant use in any really active laboratory. Well, it is all a matter of professional ethics; when a pavement artist puts "All my own work" he does not mean that the drudgery was done for him by somebody else, and when I head a scientific paper with the same proud boast every single bit of it genuinely is my own. Thus, if I want to refer to the speed of light, even *en passant*, I first time some for myself. This, I think, shows that I am no addict, but treat reference-books more as a master than a slave, dispensing with them while voyaging through strange seas of thought alone, but when not, not.

Letter to Egypt

HUNTON-ON-SEA
January 1st, 1946

DEAR COLONEL TUFT,—I promised to write to you as soon as I reached England, and to tell you at first hand what things are really like over here for the officer just "demobbed." Owing to the fact, however, that the man who originally cut up my linoleum must have been drunk, with the result that fitting it together again is what Mr. Churchill used to call a hard and heavy task, I have not until now had a spare minute.

I managed to get a flat for myself and Edith at this place, which is one of those quiet seaside resorts where people go to die when they are about sixty and then have to return to London at the age of ninety to finish themselves off with a wild round of the night clubs. London I only passed through. It is difficult to do anything else but pass through it, as hotel accommodation seems always to be booked weeks ahead, though if you try to book weeks ahead you find you cannot.

You asked me to let you know particularly about the "clippies," as they call the bus conductresses. Their ferocity, of which we heard such alarming accounts when we were in the Middle East, seems to have been very much exaggerated. In fact they call Sympson "dear," which he finds a homely change after "effendi." Tales of them refusing passengers even when the bus is only half-full, however, have some ground in truth, but I put it down not to bad temper but simply to a female inability to count. They shout "Two only on top!" and if you are one of the lucky two chosen from the seething throng you generally find that there are four or five more vacant seats upstairs. Bus-queueing, incidentally, is an art in itself, and one may be quite good at fish-queueing or even cake-queueing and yet be a complete failure at bus-queueing. You may be quite near the front of a queue, but if a bus of the wrong number comes the people who want it surge past you, carrying with them other people who want your own bus and thus get ahead of you. Then if three buses come together your own bus stops about ten yards away and is gone before you can get to it, so that if you are a gentleman you go and join the queue again at the back. Sympson tried for an hour to go to Leytonstone to see a friend of his, but in the end gave it up and went to Dalston instead, where luckily he had another friend.

As regards queueing generally, the queues are not as

long or as slow as we were led to believe in the M.E.F., or else the situation has improved.

Sausages, I think, you particularly asked me to investigate. I am glad to say that they are still the dear familiar shapes instead of the monstrous thin things we had in Egypt, and though they are supposed to contain a lot of bread they taste much as before.

My own impression is that now (whatever may have been the case a few months ago) there is not the shortage in the shops that we expected. Houses and bananas and meat and eggs and clothes are the chief shortages, but you can get things like electric-light bulbs and teapots and tin-tacks, which we used to hunger and thirst for in Egypt. And if you are moving into a new flat and laying linoleum, as I am, I can assure you a tin-tack is of more use than a banana or even an egg.

London is terrifically full of people who do not look starved, or worrying themselves to death about the American Loan or the Atom Bomb. The few really haggard faces we saw last time we were there belonged to people who were fearing they would not get half a turkey for Christmas, or wondering which end of the bird to take if they got the choice.

Altogether, if England is not in all ways quite what it used to be, it is sufficiently the same to make me grateful to those who have kept it so like its old self in what, from all accounts, have been some quite difficult times.

Sympson, who is helping us to move in, has nailed his ration book under one of the carpets but is otherwise quite fit.

LIONEL CONKLESHILL.

"The name 'Suddha Dharma' which may smack hindu in the ears of those that have developed certain strong prejudices of a lopsided nature, is just a sanskrit expression at approximating a whole concept in respect of the performance of totality of actions based on knowledge—that could not be so conveyed in any other language—and no more."—*Indian journal*.

So there you have it, smack in the ears.



"I say there's NO 'heavy water' in Buckinghamshire."



"... but, Emily, I've TOLD you: after EVERY major war there's ALWAYS one of these crime waves."

Desiderium

WHEN first I joined the
Army
In 1931,
Lest anything should harm me
Some kindly deeds were
done;
Not least of these, I reckoned,
Was giving me a man
To keep me fairly spick and
Comparatively span.

That batman was a winner,
Undaunted, undismayed—
Two ticks to change for dinner,
One minute for parade;
His skill was never wasted,
Bis bat qui cito bat,
And never in his case did
Homerus dormitat.

I reached the age of thirty
Contented and serene:

At dusk I might be dirty,
At dawn I would be clean;
No butler offered brandy
With half the grace that he
Would mix my evening shandy
Or brew my morning tea.

But now those days are over,
And peace has come to pass,
And I that was in clover
Am sunk in humble grass;
I labour like a nigger
That idled yesteryear,
A hapless, piteous figure,
A London brigadier.

Long since I owned a batman,
When I was young and
svelte;
But now, a middle-aged fat
man,
I clean my boots and belt

With curses and with rudeness,
With elbow-grease and sweat.
(I have not sunk, thank goodness,
To battle-dress as yet.)

Farewell, rewards and fairies,
Good soldiers now may say,
For parrots and canaries
Fare better far than they;
Birds are made fine by feather
As in the pre-war years,
But they don't polish leather
Like London brigadiers.

Black Markets tempt the gluttons
Who seek exotic fare;
My belt and boots and buttons
Are like to send me there:
For one Black Market item
My scruples I would waive
If I could buy, despite 'em,
A Nubian batman-slave. B. F.



THE PILGRIM COUSINS

"Sorry to lose you all. Come and see us again when things are a bit straighter."



"Well, Odysseus, you lucky fellow! I suppose you'll be getting home in a week or two now."

My Lifetime in Basic Industry

IX—The Scowle "Derby"

PRACTICALLY every article or White Paper on coal-mining that one sees to-day is made unreadable by its persistent reference to mechanization and nationalization—two ugly words that seem to drain the subject of its colour and spontaneity. These themes may be all right in themselves, but they need most careful handling.

Personally I am not at all sure about the merits of mechanization. On the whole it is a good thing, I suppose, that the pit-pony has been released from its grim bond-service, but I doubt very much whether the village of Scowle would think so. You see, the pit-ponies of Scowle, as I knew them forty-odd years ago, were no mere beasts of burden: they were a highly respected element of the village community. The miners loved them, treated them with infinite patience and kindness, and even confided in them. Above all else, the animals were prized

for their sharp hearing: they heard and recognized the straining of pit-props long before the men, and so were able to give warning of imminent danger. When the ponies ran the men ran too.

These pit-ponies—there were twenty-five all told—were owned by the Ashbridge and District Colliery Company, but the village regarded them as the private property of the older coal-face workers. And so, in 1903, when old Ben Scrimmage fell to his death down the upcast shaft of the Orange No. 2 Pit, his pony The Tetrarch passed into the care of my father.

The whole family, with the exception of my mother, was delighted by this event. Like all women in Scowle my mother was intensely jealous of the animals. Strange though it may seem, these women resented the fact that the ponies had replaced them long ago as hauliers in the mines. I well

remember how my mother used to abuse The Tetrarch whenever he committed some slight indiscretion—like tramping into the kitchen with dirty hooves.

"Work, tha calls it, does tha," she would say, "settin' on thee backside i' yon pit? Why, tha doesna knoo wha' work is. When Ah were a gal—leastways me great-grandmother—us women was down t' pit twelve hours a day, 'ard at it on 'ands an' knees, like as not. Tha doesna knoo as tha't born, lad!"

And The Tetrarch would stand patiently, his ears pressed flat in simulated humiliation, until the ordeal was over. For The Tetrarch was afraid of my mother.

In the evenings my father used to ride home from the pit on his pony. My mother would be waiting in the kitchen with a hip-bath of boiling water, and because they were all so

hungry my father, my brother Caleb and The Tetrarch would compete good-humouredly for the privilege of being the first to be flannelled.

I suppose it was inevitable in so matriarchal a society that the men's devotion to their dumb friends should have been so mawkish and intemperate. My father gave The Tetrarch the best of everything. He drank his tea unsweetened so that the pony should never lack lump-sugar, and spent hours shearing grass from Barlow's Pike so that it should have something green every day for its lunch at the Dribben seam.

There was, however, one important practical reason for this anxiety to keep the pony in tip-top condition—the Scowle "Derby." This great race was held every summer on the football ground, and was very well worth winning. The prize itself—a cheque for five pounds presented by the colliery company—was small enough, but the sums wagered on the result were usually very considerable. My father confidently entered The Tetrarch for the Derby of 1904.

Training began in earnest in March and output per man-shift rapidly declined. One reason for this was that the men took over the job of haulage. They could not afford to take risks with the runners. Another reason was that they dug hard into barren rock to lengthen the main gallery and so convert it into a practice track.

By the beginning of May The Tetrarch was in fine fettle. My father had taught him to take a left-hand bend very nicely and had lengthened his stride by several inches. My grandfather Ebby, who, on account of his lightness, had been appointed jockey, spent laborious weeks among his scientific apparatus contriving and fashioning a pair of strong-lensed spectacles for the pony—for like most pit-ponies The Tetrarch was somewhat short-sighted.

As precautionary measures my father slept in the pony's stable on the eve of the race and old Ebby was sent to bed very early without his customary quart.

The Orange No. 2 Pit was closed next day: Scowle was *en fête*. In the morning we held a sort of party at our humble cottage. A trestle-table was set up in the street before our door and loaded with the sausage rolls and jam tarts that my mother had made during the night. These refreshments were intended for the procession of villagers who came to examine The Tetrarch before placing their bets, but

my younger sister Madge and myself managed to do quite well for ourselves, without ostentation.

At noon my mother grilled a large steak for old Ebby and talked seriously to him about tactics. Then she too visited the stable. She stood before The Tetrarch and there was an awkward silence.

"Well," she said at length, "tha looks moer like 'n' ospital case thon a race'orse, but tha'lt win yon race, lad, or tha con look elsewheer f' thee bed an' board."

And after that we all set off proudly for the football ground. On the way my father did a strange thing. He collected a handful of twigs, whispered earnestly with my grandfather Ebby and pressed them into his hand.

A great cheer greeted us when we appeared on the track, but there was louder applause for Jem Clewlow and his pony. Fancy Woman was now firm favourite at about three to one against. The Tetrarch stood at fifteen to two.

We had not long to wait. Dr. Warburton rang his bell to clear the course and the competitors lined up. My father patted The Tetrarch's flanks and wished old Ebby good luck. My grandfather was wearing the colours of the Scowle Football Club—as were the other jockeys—and he looked very handsome. At last everything was ready. Dr. Warburton raised his arm and they were off to a terrific yell of excitement.

Fancy Woman led from the start. She got away nicely, pulled over to the inside and established a lead of three lengths. At the first goal-post The Tetrarch was in the middle of a field of eighteen.

They started the second lap with Fancy Woman eight lengths in front of Dribben Girl and Smoking Ruin, and The Tetrarch nowhere. I looked anxiously at my father and there were tears in his eyes. My mother's face was livid with rage.

And then as they came round for the last lap I saw old Ebby take a twig from beneath his jersey and lean over The Tetrarch's neck. I saw him bend the twig until it broke against the pony's ear. For a moment I thought they were down. The Tetrarch shuddered violently with terror in his eyes. Then he bolted at a tremendous speed. Old Ebby repeated the performance just as they entered the final straight. Once again The Tetrarch heard the ominous creaking of timbers and fled in panic. We passed Fancy Woman thirty yards from the post and won comfortably by two lengths. Hon.

Cri de Crustt

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—Am setting this down to ask you a question as to what you have against me that you ignore my funny articles and jokes which I send you regular in anticipation and though I do not lower or bemean myself to feel a spite for this neglect it makes me feel small like when I tells all my friends to read your paper to see my work therein and if no satisfaction is forthcoming they are going to stop going to the public library to read it not that this is intended for a threat but is just a friendly warning orn passong as they say in the local chess club.

It is not as if my articles were not good because they have been praised far and wide even outside of my extensive family and especially one which I got published at a cost of three pound ten from a very nice spoken gentleman judging from his letters and when I see all this in the papers about all you people crying out for new writers with new blood it makes me smile a bit as it would you if you were me.

Nor is it that I copy the style of your writers because I can swear that I have hardly ever read a copy but have had a glance at some of the pictures which are not bad or coloured and some of my friends say as how they would not read such dull doings but I will not go as far as that till I see the result of the next post. Nor can you need bigger articles than mine because I have always made a point of giving value for money if any and in any case I will not take up more of your time for I know how valuable it is made out to be. So with greetings and all that I go for now,

Yours etc.,

BILL (WILLIAM) CRUSTT.

o o

Footprints in the Sands of Time

"—, a 45-year old man in his stockinged feet . . ."—*Scottish paper*.

o o

"The present government was not elected by a majority of the people, and it is more dangerous than the last because it can pursue the same policy as its predecessors without their needed hypocrisy. Mr. Burbridge seems to think naively that the policy pursued is decided at elections, whereas it is pursued irrespective of the joa n . nsuktl ri&ffiyav fwly party in office. Only the name changes."

Kent paper.

Not always, perhaps, for the better.

Topsy Turvy

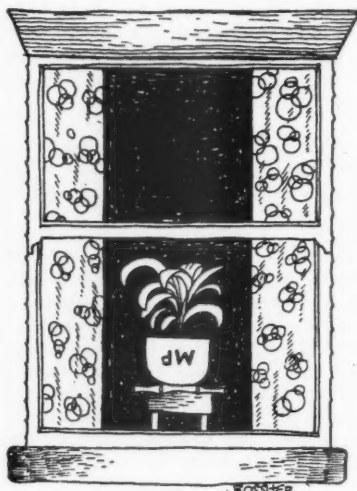
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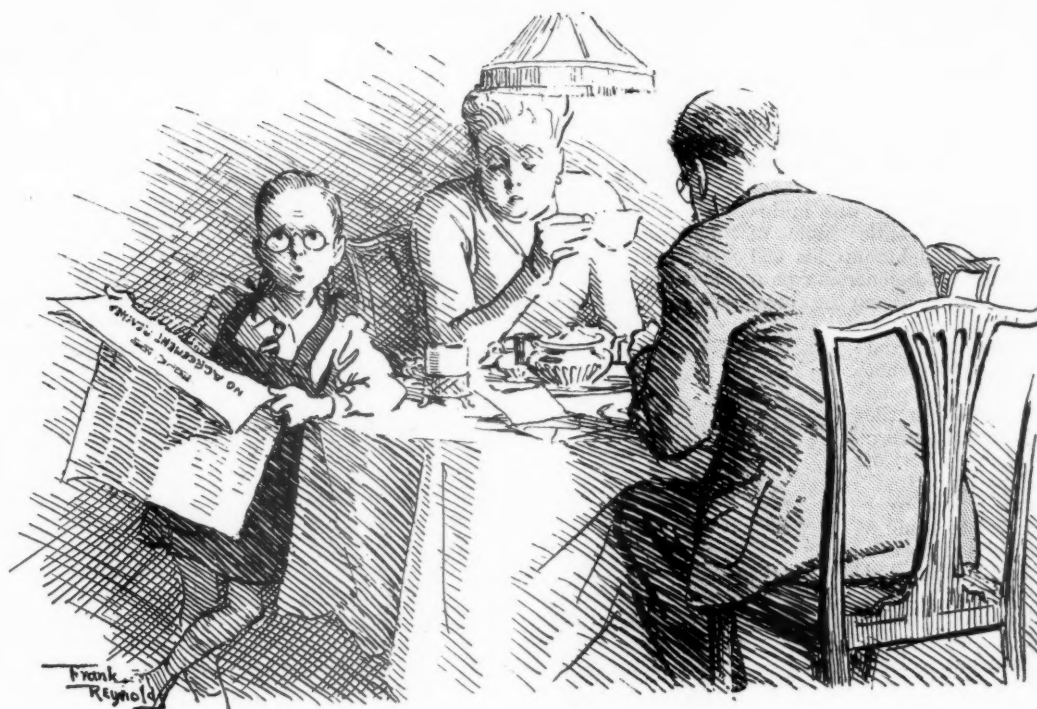
TRIX, my distant woodpigeon, sensation, what do you think, I'm going to write a book, or part of it, or anyhow be in it, I know you never glance at my letters, but Henry does I hope, and perhaps he'll remember I told you about my bandit, the small-sized weasel I lashed and dispersed with cruel holly in the hall, well what was my astonishment yesterday he telecommunicated and asked if he could "contact up with me a coupla minutes," my dear as Haddock says it's too bizarre the words they waste these tough and snappy categories, because contact was pompous enough and meet up with was worse but when it comes to contact up with, when all you mean is see, however I said whatever for, and he said he reckoned he had to hand himself a coupla basinfuls of humble pie, by which my dear I gathered he meant apologize, so never yet having had an apology from a bandit I did the gracious, which Haddock to my surprise supported, so we made a date when Haddock could be there, Haddock by the way insisted on digging out the rustiest German weapon he brought back from the last war but one, for which praises be he has never had an inch of ammunition, because he said for all we knew there was dirty work in the offing still, he knew the type, which of course is so spurious, but my dear I must inform you that Haddock to my mortal shame reads absolute leagues of all this toughness stuff, moaning the entire time What muck what utter muck but wallowing deeply and quite inconsolable unless there's a new Timothy Brine, who is perhaps one of the least intolerable, I did actually wade womanfully through one of his, but my dear what squalor, what insanitary English, nobody is ever shot except in the stomach, everyone talks like a hairy ape, there are no women only dames frails and floosies, and every third paragraph the detective has a slug of rye or four fingers of Scotch, my dear where they get all the whisky and how they do any detecting on it, in one book Haddock calculated in one night and day the G-man hero got rid of four bottles of Scotch and one of rye, and this was in the Home Counties 1944, however as I say these works are manna to my respected Haddock, what is more it now appears he rather fancies himself as a psychowhatisit student of the underworld, anyhow he said he must sit with the gun in the back drawing

room in case my humble pieman was not on the level or the up and up or something, my dear what expressions, well at last my adored Mrs. B. who is doing a brief chore or two again now her breadwinner is better brings up the little bandit, who my dear without his hat looks littler than ever, practically invisible, and what with the holly-scars on his poor little face which is like the face of a backward mouse all the mother-bird is beginning to stir in me, when judge darling of my astonishment and dismay, before the bandit-waif has had time to open his tiny mouth I hear Haddock say too savagely Stick 'em up pal, and out of the shadow he comes with that laughable pistol, my dear imagine all this in a girl's own drawing-room, W.6, well the little bandit puts his hands up and says Look dame, I kinda thought you and me was on the up and up, I thought maybe you'd let me get next to you alone, but now I guess I gotta take what's coming to me, well then Haddock said What's beefing you chum, or something, I'm gonna frisk you, maybe you pack a rod, at which my dear I merely flopped on to the sofa in a state of wonder and blush, too lowering, well Haddock went through all the little bandit's pockets, he found a tobacco-pouch, a spectacle-case, two pipes, a bit of string, a wallet, a box of matches, quite empty I need hardly say, and an envelope which he read out too suspiciously, To Timothy Brine, he said, Whadya know about Timothy Brine, well then my dear the little

bandit said softly in the sweetest little Cockney voice, I am Timothy Brine, my dear I thought then that Haddock would fall in a faint, but it seems he told me afterwards it's the done thing with bandits never to show surprise at anything, anyhow all he said was, Look pal could you use a shotta Scotch, and the little man said Thank-you sir, with lots of water, and look here you needn't keep up the American I'm no more American than Westminster Abbey, even then darling it seemed Haddock could not throw off his part once started, because he said something like Listen boyo no funny business or I'll drill you so full of holes a culinder'll look like it could hold a gallon of rye, which my dear will show you how much he's absorbed of this unspeakable imbecility and just how deep the canker's gone.

Well, darling, while he's "fixing" the drinks as he now calls it I get the little ex-bandit to sit down and sorta draw him out, O gosh I'm catching it, my dear it's the most affecting story you ever heard, it seems he really is Timothy Brine, or rather he isn't, because his real name is Cuthbert something, he's a library assistant at East Wansley, and he has a widowed mother who's been dying for years and has to have constant operations and oranges and everything, well in off-hours at the library he read all the Tough Guy and Stomach-shooting School one after the other, till at last he said a little voice inside said Cuthbert boyo you can do this, which accordingly he did, though my dear he's never been near America, in fact the longest he's ever been absent from mother was a day-trip to Southend in 1939, but you see he's utterly absorbed the atmo and the lingo from the books, which shows how pseudo it all must be, on the other hand he must have a little swamp of an imagination because my dear some of the episodes in the early works, however darling you know how they sold perhaps, and you must always remember that all this was in aid of a poor sick mother, but my dear now comes the thumping tread of tragedy and gloom, the poor sick mother declines to die, resuscitated of course by these miasmatic but cash-creating books, what is more she now has such a high standard of dying so to speak, meanwhile my poor little chum think's he's drying up, he's done the same thing over and over like they all do, yes my dear I know I mean as,





"Gosh! the same old muddle, muddle, muddle!"

and now he wants some more *reality* to mine and quarry, but of course he *can't* go to the States because of poor sick *mother*, and besides he'd probably be *slaughtered* by the Stomach-shooters *not* to mention the *authors* if they only knew, so the *pathetic* sweet has been picking the dust-bins for reality *here*, Haddock was *too* right the first thing he tried was *divorce* detective because nothing he thought poor innocent could lead a chap deeper into the cosmic midden, whereas nothing in fact it seems could be more respectable and *drab*, but he thought Well anyhow what a good "*front*" as they call it for burglary or banditry, moreover says he a chap who is practically *always* writing about hold-ups etcetera *ought* perhaps from time to time to do one *himself* if only to get the *psychowhatisit* accurate, which I think is *so* right don't you agree darling, *hence* anyhow as I've told you he makes his *trembling* assault upon the Haddock home, and of course *how* fruitful because I'm *too* sure that half the time the bandit's *bleak* with apprehension but no one *says* so, well then it seems he's *so* impressed with the Topsy technique and her *heroic* holly act, *about* which

he's quite unresentful, he thinks I *must* get next to *that* dame, my dear *what* language, so the idea is, I gather, only of course there's Haddock who's *too* disappointed it's not a *real* bandit, *thrilled* up to a point to meet Timothy Brine, but slumped no little to find he's a Wansey *librarian*, and how far he'll be *quite* keen on my being the chief dame frail or *floosie* in a new Timothy

Brine is an avenue still to be *explored* so to speak, however we've both promised to aid the little bandit *all* we can, if it's only some sage advice on dress or drink, and who knows we *may* reduce the stomach-shooting ration, and *even*, though too unlikely, get a word or two of *English* into the works, farewell your battling patriot Topsy.

A. P. H.

"... and the Far Woods Are Dim."

I GAVE him a lift that morning. He was a United States soldier on leave. He wanted to get to Fadford.

We spoke to each other again after some miles.

"Hev a seegar?" He passed me a dozen.

"Thanks!"

At the sight of black birds a few hours later we talked once more.

"Kraws?"

"Rooks, ectully."

A flock of black birds in the next county revived our conversation.

"Kraws?"

"Rooks, ectully."

In a parish or two he broke the silence. "Look to me maiy laike kraws."

I couldn't think of anything.

Daylight faded. A subject occurred to me. "You cawn't miss it. Fodford!" He left me a bale of cartoons as he got out. "Hev a feg, wot?"

"A battle of skatch?" I thrust my New Year's gift into his arms

"Rule Brettonnia!" he said. "Thanks a lat! Nice guy; talks my language."

At the Play

"CINDERELLA" (ADELPHI)

BUD FLANAGAN—I cannot bring myself to call so human a being, and one so dear to the public heart, Mr. FLANAGAN—is the very incarnation of the avuncular. One can almost hear the jingle of the half-crowns in his pockets, and the gentle smile of friendliness which lights up his sad face would draw children across mountains. Directly he comes on the stage, his ample trousers swinging like circus-tents and his battered straw-hat flapping over his thinning dome, every child in the audience is secretly sworn in on his side by a sort of electric telepathy.

Having made that clear I must confess to being a little disappointed in this show, which I expected would be funnier. It is the old story of the principal comic having to play too lone a hand. BUD FLANAGAN is kept very busy in the rôle of universal uncle and is short of a "feed" on his own level, who could take the strain. Also it seemed to me that some of the business incidental to the *Cinderella* story—and what a story!—might have been more ingeniously arranged. The major incident of the slipper-trial, for instance (which the Farjeons have used so richly), is almost thrown away.

There is much, however, to please most tastes. Miss LOIS GREEN can sing, and proves a winning *Cinderella*, though her turn-out from the neck upwards suggests the Berkshire Buttery rather than the kitchen of Stoneybroke Hall. Miss JEAN ADRIENNE gives *Prince Charming* a royal address and a good voice, and Miss PEGGY RAWLINGS' *Dandini* would be anywhere a creditable A.D.C. The *Ugly Sisters* are played with a feminine abnegation which must command respect by Miss MARION DAWSON, in the energetic tradition of Nellie Wallace, and Miss BOBBIE KIMBER, who also provides one of the special plums in Mr. JACK HYLTON's Christmas cake, as a ventriloquist. She handles quick cross-talk between her two dolls in a manner

which quite deceives the eye, and even when they sing she remains no more than an interested spectator.

If only the brokers' men who issue from Carey Street had half the gifts of BAKER, DOVE and ALLEN bankruptcy would be more popular than ever. These possess strange powers over hats, and stranger still over Indian clubs disguised as liqueur chocolates, if you can remember what I mean. Between them they keep eleven of these missiles in complex circulation, even with BUD FLANAGAN in the way. Then there are BEAMS' CHILDREN,



NEW SUITS WITHOUT COUPONS

Buttons. MR. BUD FLANAGAN
Fairy MISS BEBE DE ROLAND

acrobatic dancers, whose drill is remarkable whichever way up they may be, and DUDLEY's MIDGETS, who treat DUDLEY, apparently a very large man though it is difficult to tell, much as the earnest hobnailed treat the Matterhorn. The lady midget is not noticeably muscular but must have prodigious strength, picking up DUDLEY and A. N. OTHER as if they were merely light articles, like this. She could make her pile at Waterloo.

Lastly (only because she is small), Miss ANGELA GLYNNE, whose *Tinki* revolves blissfully round the FLANAGAN sun. No horrid infant prod, but a good, steady, capable little actress.

ERIC.

"TREASURE ISLAND" (GRANVILLE)

This story was such a shining example of what children wanted that it is hard to understand why, during the sixty odd years since it was written, the British nursery should have been so drenched in bogus mysticism. It would be interesting to know if R. L. S. was as popular with the Victorian small girl as he was bound to be with her brothers; for the modern miss seems perfectly suited in a plot on which Edgar Wallace could hardly have improved, in adventures

which out-Buchan Buchan, in a whole-hearted villainy with which Hollywood's pallid desperadoes cannot hope to compete—in a story, in fact, which is undated and unbeatable. *Long John Silver* is a tremendous creation, and so is *Ben Gunn*, and in *Jim Hawkins* every child with a spark of spirit can see himself having the time of his life.

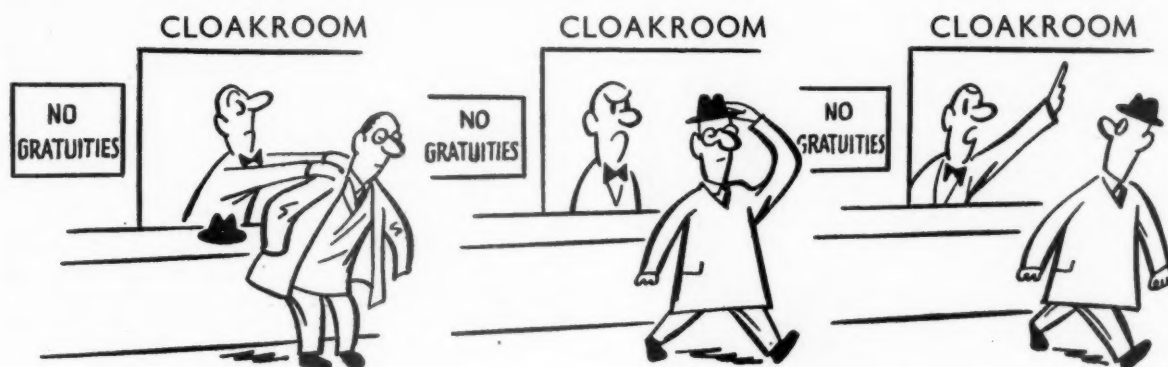
This production of Mr. J. B. FAGAN's adaptation is here and there on the slow side, but in the main it gets what STEVENSON meant and presents it full-bloodedly. Mr. TONY QUINN's *Silver* has a vigour and invective felicity which I found admirable, except once, and that was when *Silver*, having visited the nobs in the log-hut, is floating himself out again on a stream of the richest offal, culminating in the word "Scum!" Of all the expressive words which could have been chosen out of a language by no means weak in the scurrilous, "Scum!" alone was possible. It is perfect. To me

it represents a great moment, and I therefore sorrowfully record that Mr. QUINN's enunciation of it is below par.

Miss JEAN FORBES-ROBERTSON's boyish eager *Jim* is charming, and holds the balance of power nicely. Mr. HUGH PRYSE gives *Ben* an addled oddity which must put even our new national castaway Major Munday on his mettle; Mr. TRISTAN RAWSON is outstanding as the *Doctor*; Mr. NICHOLAS GRIMSHAW makes a resolute *Captain Smollett*, and Mr. HYLTON ALLEN's *Squire* has a vintage crust.

The supporting thugs are as scintillating a bunch as you could find on your own doorstep any of these dark nights.

ERIC.



Manners Makey Man.

THREE men lay in a small cell at Japanese Gestapo Headquarters whilst their cases were being investigated—Lim and See-luk, Chinese, and I.

Bugs swarmed through cracks in the floor, and sometimes a sentry would give us strips of paper to paste over the openings, but we had to provide paste ourselves, by using some of our meagre rice rations.

See-luk was young, and very hungry. He gobbled every grain of his rice, and expected us to provide for his bugs. One day I rebelled.

"See-luk," I said, "why come to me for rice? Why not keep some of your own for a change?"

He turned his back on me and sat down. Lim, father of the cell and oldest inhabitant, looked at the wall. No one spoke for hours. In the evening I edged up to Lim.

"What's the matter?" I whispered: talking was forbidden and the sentry not far away.

"You were rude to See-luk," he said, "and should apologize."

"I rude to See-luk! That greedy young devil eats all his own rice every day and then expects us to provide for him. I'm fed up with it."

"Whether he uses your rice or you use his," said Lim, "does not matter. You had rice, but when he asked you for it you refused. That was rude."

"He was rude to ask for it," said I.

"You were rude," repeated Lim firmly, "and also greedy."

Lim was silent for a moment whilst the sentry peered into the cell.

"Our ways and your ways are different," he said thoughtfully. "Do you remember what happened a few days ago, when you two were talking and the sentry heard you and beat me by mistake?"

I remembered.

"Afterwards See-luk laughed. That was right, for to a Chinese it was amusing. But you also laughed. That was not right, for to a European it is not comical to see his friend beaten by mistake. . . . Do not apologize. It was nothing. Do I say anything when you are punished on my account? No, for there is no need for me, as a Chinese, to correct the sentry, who in any case would certainly not believe me."

"Lim," I said, "stick to the point. That has nothing to do with See-luk wanting my rice."

Lim waved his arm.

"Merely an example," he said. "Confucius . . ."

"Don't talk to me about Confucius," I interrupted. "I'm sure he never said that See-luk could eat all his rice, and then ask for mine. Take a simple case, and let Confucius decide it. Two boys are given half a dozen sweets each. Boy One eats his so quickly that when he has finished them all Boy Two has still a couple left. Boy One asks Boy Two for a sweet, and Boy Two refuses. Who—according to Confucius—is the greedy one?"

"Boy Two," said Kim without hesitation. "He who has, and does not give when asked, is both rude and greedy."

"Lim," I said, "you win. I shall apologize to See-luk at once—only, if you ever come to England, try to forget Confucius."

* * * * *

"You understand Chinese ways a little better," Lim said to me some days later, noticing that I was now eating my rice so fast that I was the first in the cell to finish. "Would you care for some of my rice for your bug paper?"





"It says 'Make yourselves thoroughly at home. We'll be back later'."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Calling the Lapsed Soul

REALIZING, perhaps, that the acceptance of Hell is the compassionate man's greatest barrier to Heaven, Mr. C. S. LEWIS tackles from another angle the theme of *Screwtape*. *The Great Divorce* (BLES, 7/6) is a fantasy with a moral. It shows why the marriage of Heaven and Hell is impossible. It even tries to show, with grateful deference to Julian of Norwich's ulterior vision, why the blest can be supremely happy while the damned are still damned. The enterprise is rendered difficult by the fact—a tribute, obviously, to our fallen nature—that Heaven is much less like the world as we have made it than Hell is. When an admirably Jekyll-and-Hyde prelude finds the hero in Hell's bus-queue, the situation, though dismal, has a certain homeliness. But when Heaven is reached and the damned are met by the blessed and given their chance of remaining—Mr. LEWIS's Purgatory being Hell-with-a-way-out—the dream's doctrine is more sympathetic than its exponents. Saints should be highly differentiated persons. But while the sinners here are as differentiated as Dante's, the saints seem to exude bliss and suck it up like sponges. Yet, over and over again, the divine economy is made more understandable—the first and highest aim of the book is attained.

H. P. E.

Cricket's Golden Age

"How strongly are all those scenes of fifty years bygone painted in my memory!—and the smell of that ale comes upon me as freshly as the new May flowers." Thus John

Nyren in London looked back at the glories of Hambledon, and thus to-day Mr. Neville Cardus looks back, from far-away Sydney, at the golden age of batsmanship, which he places precisely between 1890 and 1914. In his brief survey of the whole story of the game (*English Cricket*, COLLINS, 4/6) he is always generous. He believes that David Harris pushing his fast underhand balls from beneath his armpit would still, on Hambledon turf, present the modern batsman with a problem. No one could pay more devout homage to the eternally dwarfing greatness of W. G., and he fully recognizes the grandeur as well as the ruthless efficiency of Bradman. But his heart is with the heroes of his golden age, and in particular with Trumper and Ranji. Of the latter, George Giffen said he was no batsman but a conjurer, and an old Yorkshire professional that he "never played a Christian stroke in his life." Now listen to Mr. CARDUS at his most lyrical: "When he turned approved science upside down and changed the geometry of batsmanship to an esoteric legerdemain, we were bewitched to the realms of rope-dancers and snake-charmers; this was a cricket of Oriental sorcery, glowing with a dark beauty of its own." These are very different styles of eulogy, and the reader, having paid his money, may take his choice. The little book has some delightful pictures, and there is one of a match at Knole in 1775 which seems to catch as in a net the whole charm and romance of cricket. The players wear knee-breeches and three-cornered hats, but that makes no difference. *Ecoutez les Gascons, c'est toute la Gascogne*.

B. D.

The End of an Era

Mr. ESMÉ WINGFIELD-STRATFORD is insistent that *Before the Lamps Went Out* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 12/6) is not an autobiography. "I only come into the picture," he writes, "in so far as it is my memory of which I am making you free; it is with my eyes that I am asking you to see, and with my senses to feel, not my past, but the past." The process of seeing the period from 1882 to 1914 through Mr. WINGFIELD-STRATFORD's eyes, and in the light of his memories, produces, however, much the same effect as though we were reading his personal reminiscences. The atmosphere of his early years was impregnated with sport, the traditions of the services, detestation of Gladstone and worship of Queen Victoria. Had he been at home in this environment, his praise of the past would have been spontaneous, but he was "the one hopeless duffer in a family of athletes," and his interests appear to have been mainly aesthetic and intellectual. Hence the perpetual and bewildering shifting of his standpoint. At one moment he celebrates the chase as "a great, popular festival, with the gentry as its officiating priesthood"; in another he characterizes the sports and games of the leisured classes in his youth as "a perpetual stampede from boredom." There is, however, much of incidental interest in this survey of the decades before the 1914-18 war, particularly in the chapters on Eton, King's College, Cambridge, and the London School of Economics in the days of the Sidney Webbs.

H. K.

The Farmer's Wife

The Chronicles of Church Farm (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 8/6) is an ingenuous and intelligent attempt to beguile the town into sympathetic understanding of the country. Its ingenuousness is evinced in too many concessions to the townie's taste for non-stop amusement. One can see Mrs. MONICA HUTCHINGS placating her evacuees with all those clever cat-and-dog stories. But livestock is not her paramount interest. She helps you, very happily and

modestly, to realize that it is by the young housewife that the English countryside—and the food supply—is going to stand or fall. Older women are either reigning contentedly or have already abdicated. Men with a love for the land are hard to drive away. But here is a young woman, gallant and prepossessing, who puts farming first as a way of life, and finds, one perceives, the running of her household as creative as the conduct of an orchestra. Not that the writer ignores what is commonly called culture. She has assembled a delightful children's dancing-class and composes her own ballet. But the farm comes first; and the farmer's wife is anxious to show that a nation honestly concerned to produce fine people and good food could build its really adventurous couples more propitious destinies and itself a more dependable larder.

H. P. E.

Warsaw Inferno

Of all the resistance movements the rising in the ghetto in Warsaw was one of the bravest and most spectacular. The final armed outbreak was hopeless, but it was magnificent and, while it lasted, bitterly wounding to German pride. The whole incident and the almost unimaginable brutality, squalor and courage of its background are powerfully described by Mr. LOUIS GOLDING in *The Glory of Elsie Silver* (HUTCHINSON, 10/6), a novel which carries his little Doomington heroine a stage further in her extraordinary career and, it seems, to her end, unless he is leaving the way open, by only presuming her dead, for the artificial respiration of which even Conan Doyle was not ashamed. He has certainly brought her far, some will think improbably far, from the back street in Lancashire, for this book finds her married to the S.S. General, von Brockenburg (whose mistress she was in *Mr. Emmanuel*) and still permitted to wander at will through a Germany already feeling the weight of Bomber Command; but the more one reads of the inverted fairy-tale of the Nazis the less improbable does any fantasy appear. Elsie's husband falls foul of Himmler, and after his death in Warsaw her path of escape leads through the ghetto. Through the black market which seems to have followed the S.S. everywhere, arms have been collected for the army of irregulars gathering like rats in the sewers of the city. They are brilliantly organized and led, and Elsie finds herself plunged from the hothouse existence of a gangster's wife into the bitterest of guerrilla fighting. It is a dramatic story and, though for the present the human mind must have absorbed about all the horror it can take, a reminder of what some of the others went through.

E. O. D. K.

An Hungarian Odyssey

The literary judgment of the Nazis was far from impeccable, and it by no means follows that because *The Happy Generation* (NICHOLSON AND WATSON, 12/6) was, as its jacket informs us, banned in all Nazi-occupied countries, it is therefore a masterpiece. Published in Hungarian in 1934, it had already by the outbreak of the war been translated into seven European languages. One can understand why. For some decades there has been a taste, both in England and on the Continent, for enormous Odysseys which provide a detailed record of a male human being's life from ingenuous infancy down to what the author, if not always the reader, conceives to be a state of spiritual enlightenment and general liberation from mundane illusions. Such an Odyssey is Mr. FERENC KÖRMENDI's history of Paul Hegedüs, the hero of *The Happy Generation*. Paul's childhood in his prosperous Budapest

home is a happy one. But when mother dies and father marries the governess, the scene begins to darken. In due course, though Mr. KÖRMENDI may be too leisurely for some tastes, Paul loses his primal innocence. By this time the war of 1914-18 has been in progress for some time, but incipient tuberculosis removes Paul to a Swiss sanatorium where he divides his attentions between an American mother and daughter, a regimen which sends him back, fit and hearty, to Budapest, a successful business career, and the breakdown of both his marriages, episodes described with a force and conviction not attained elsewhere by the author.

H. K.

Plot and Policy

One day, no doubt, enlightened authors will form an Association for Ensuring the Survival of the Nobility. Someone may have to do it, and authors have a particular interest. Wherever would they be without this cynosure? Or—which is perhaps more to the point—wherever would their readers be? Mr. STEPHEN LISTER is the latest author to find the subject useful, and he does not waste his time. His *Eight Oaks* (PETER DAVIES, 8/6) is an unusual novel in having both a plot and a policy, the one Victorian and the other quite up to date. According to Mr. LISTER, the Whitshanes have lorded it for centuries—benevolently, on the whole—in their happy valley, but now it is time the Whitshanes went. He is thus clever enough to have it both ways—providing the age-old innocent pleasure of peeping at the world far, far above stairs and at the same time placating one's political conscience with reasons for disliking what one sees there. The story, which is full and as deftly put together as in a true Victorian novel, has also a true Victorian element—the son born, apparently, the wrong side of the blanket. But Mr. LISTER is much too clever to base his disapproval on anything so ordinary as this. He bases it instead on the Whitshanes' ventures in foreign investment (the only way, in modern times, to go on running their valley as a model farm) and the part they have in consequence in the alleged conspiracy to force England off the Gold Standard and so ruin a former Labour Government. Whether or no the reader can quite believe in this, the book is still lively, humorous and eventful and has the uncommon and inestimable merit of an end and a beginning.

J. S.



"Fierce? Oh no, sir—they're spaniels."

News from Czechoslovakia

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am very much afraid that I have finished my last trip abroad at Government expense. It is not so much that they have come to object to it all. It is just that my Age and Service Group seem, incredibly enough, to be approaching the moment of release. Still, our journey back from Czechoslovakia was sufficiently exciting.

Vaclar (which, as I think I explained, is the Czech way of spelling Wenceslas) came with me, and for some reason he had been entrusted with an enormous pile of documents to transport to London. I knew they would prove a nuisance throughout, and my advice was to deposit them in the Left Luggage Office in Plzen Station. But no. Vaclar is curiously proud in some ways.

It wasn't as though the papers were our only luggage. I had a number of gramophone records, a set of hand-painted wooden toast-racks, a plaited fibre shopping basket (for my future civilian status), a small folding table, and of course the usual collection of military baggage and equipment. The shopping basket was the thing I cared for least. For one thing, it looks rather odd carrying it in uniform, and it is not as though one would have the face to do any shopping in Europe at the present time. But there it was. It was a present and perhaps it will look better in the Brompton Road. Vaclar was travelling light, except for these papers.

We decided to fly back. We thought it would be more pleasant than travelling across Europe to Calais in an open truck and then finding that the Channel was impossibly rough. Vaclar, having stayed in Plzen before, had come to know the American sergeant who runs the airfield there quite well, so we decided to start from there. All you need to fly anywhere in the world now is just one friend at one airfield. If you land anywhere by air the officials at that field will be glad to get you off on any plane going anywhere. If only the American sergeant had not used up his official book of tickets I believe we could have booked right through to San Francisco. As it was, he gave us a chit to his friend at Munich and

said there would be a plane along in a day or so.

As a matter of fact we missed one plane, as Vaclar left the documents in a cinema the first afternoon and it took a long time to convince the American M.P. who found them that they were not all in Russian.

Still, on the third day the sergeant phoned our hotel to say that he was holding a plane for us and that we had better rush as there was a general aboard, so we had to cut breakfast rather fine and by 11 we were in Munich.

Munich airfield is rather depressing. It has been heavily bombed and those parts of the central hall that have not collapsed give you the impression that they have just been waiting for you to arrive before doing so—a situation familiar enough in nightmares but none the less disconcerting when you actually encounter it. The airfield itself seemed to be in charge of a rather efficient German girl, and she fixed us with tickets for London, so after that we were well prepared for the journey.

The trouble at Munich was that the papers disappeared again and it was only after a great deal of searching that we found them, stowed with the baggage of a French officer on his way to Vienna. I had to engage the French officer with sparkling conversation while Vaclar removed them, for by that time our plane on was waiting and any attempt at an explanation would only have cost us a day in Munich. I dare say it has improved my French—two or three hundred per cent., I should think, as I stood talking, or rather listening, for a good five minutes, to give Vaclar all the time he needed.

The journey to Frankfurt was unpleasant. There are mountains and things underneath on the way. It was a pity, for there was rather an interesting looking Hungarian girl on board on the way to Paris, and Vaclar had to deal with her. But at Frankfurt there was a distinct check in our flight. It seemed that we had missed the last London plane from there and that all they could do for us was pass us on to Paris and leave us to spend the night there. Vaclar hastily changed all our money into French francs and

I recovered sufficiently to start on a few simple lessons in Hungarian. It is a remarkably interesting language, looked at dispassionately.

Frankfurt was also remarkable for the fact that there was no trouble with the bundle of papers.

We reached Paris with the sun dangerously high in the sky and no sign of any friendly storm. But we were still full of hope. But, alas—you can guess our fate. Some incredibly efficient person found a plane for London that had just not left and which had a couple of seats unfilled, so we stood by to embark. Then we asked for the luggage. It was not only the papers that had gone this time. Both the shopping bag and the records were missing too.

Well, the men on that airfield may still be in uniform but they have already all the evasive charm of a good civilian official. No, they had not seen any of the missing articles. They were far too wise to deny that they actually existed. They were just vague. They might still be in the aircraft that had brought us from Frankfurt. That aircraft might still be on the park. Contrariwise, the articles might have gone to the freight shed, or the purser's office, or the lost property bureau, or to—but why go through the list? I suppose everyone who travels has heard it all.

Actually the shopping bag was still in the aircraft, the papers were underneath a bag labelled "Salvage," and the records had already reached the sergeants' mess. Still, the sergeants were very nice about them. As they said, they weren't looking for things like the New World Symphony. The only annoying thing about the search was that they held the plane to London back for us while we hunted.

Of course the ideal conclusion to this story would be if I could say that we left the papers in the taxi when we got to Victoria and that they have never been heard of from that day to this. They did fall in the mud at Victoria, and perhaps we might have left them in the taxi, if we could have found a taxi. As it was, Vaclar delivered them by bus the following morning.

Your loving son HAROLD.

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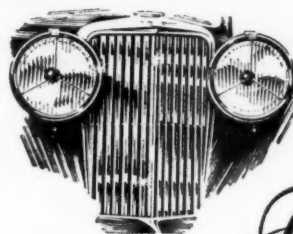
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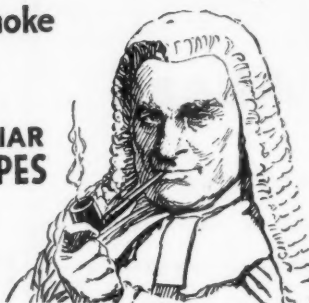
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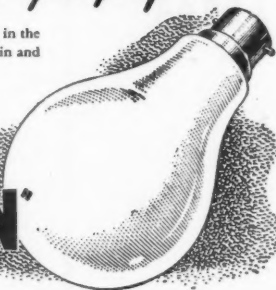
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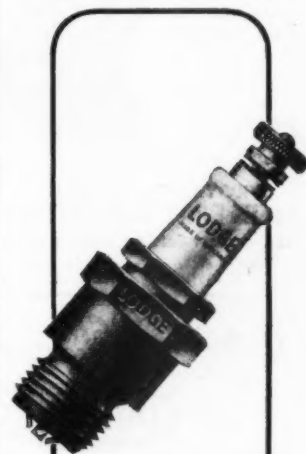


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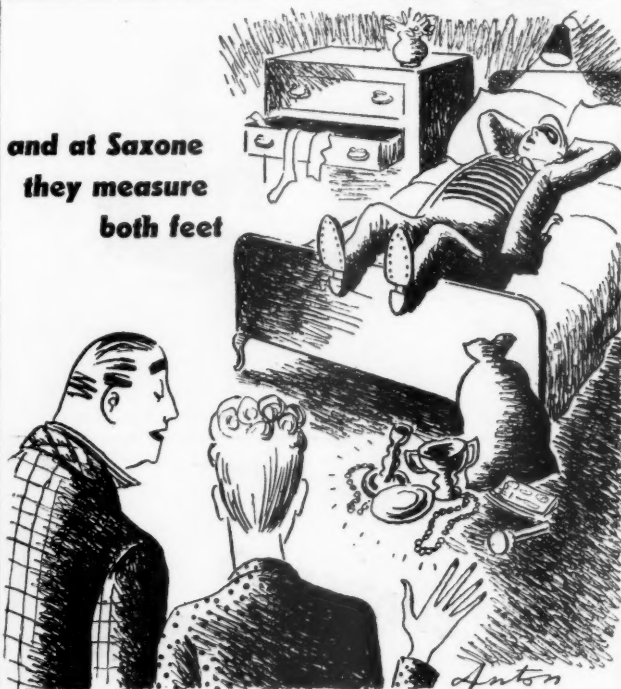
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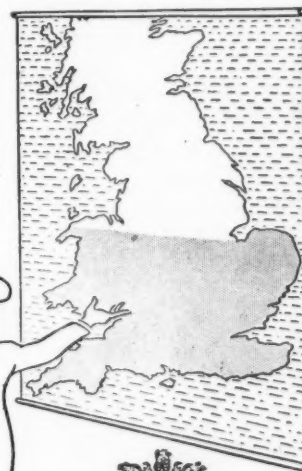
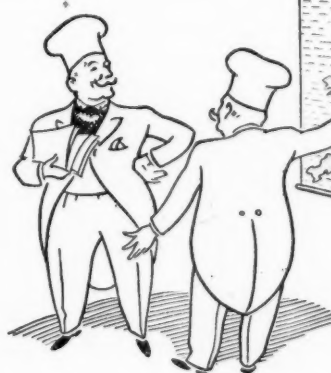
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